

## Message Text

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47

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 TRSE-00 OMB-01 ( ISO ) W

----- 096185

R 231421Z AUG 76

FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8238

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE JERUSALEM 1116

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECON, PINS, IS, JO

SUBJ: ANTI VAT STRIKE ENDS ON WEST BANK

REF: JERUSALEM 1101

1. THE ANTI-VAT STRIKE IN NABLUS ENDED AUGUST 21  
AFTER LASTING 20 DAYS. NORMAL COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY  
ALSO RESUMED IN TULKARM AND QALQILYA WHERE THE STRIKE  
HAD BEEN ON AND OFF.

2. THE STRIKE'S END CAME AFTER A STATEMENT AUG. 20  
BY CIVIC LEADERS OF NABLUS, BETHLEHEM AND QALQILYA  
WHICH CALLED FOR "SUSPENSION" OF THE STRIKE, BUT  
CONTINUED NON-COMPLIANCE WITH PROVISIONS OF THE VAT.  
SPECIFICALLY, THE STATEMENT CALLS UPON WEST BANK  
MERCHANTS TO REFUSE TO COLLECT THE TAX OR KEEP BOOKS  
REQUIRED IN CONNECTION WITH THE TAX.

3. COMMENT: THEIR DEFIANT STATEMENT SAVES THE  
WEST BANKERS SOME FACE AS THEY END THEIR STRIKE WITHOUT  
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WINNING THE POINT OF PRINCIPLE, I.E. THAT VAT IS AN

ILLEGAL TAX IMPOSED BY OCCUPIERS ON OCCUPIED. TO THE  
EXTENT THEY MUST IMPORT GOODS FROM AND THROUGH ISRAEL,  
THEY WILL INDEED PAY THE VAT IMPOSED THERE. WHETHER  
THE ISRAELIS CAN OR WILL TRY TO COLLECT 8 PERCENT  
ON "VALUE ADDED" BY THE WEST BANKERS IS ANOTHER QUESTION.  
THERE HAVE BEEN INDICATIONS ISRAEL MAY LET  
SLEEPING DOG LIE. IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT THE FINAL  
"FACE-SAVING" CALL FOR THE STRIKE'S END CAME FROM  
BETHLEHEM AS WELL AS NABLUS. EXCEPT FOR A ONE-DAY  
EFFORT ON AUGUST 16 THE STRIKE HAD LONG BEEN OVER THERE.  
JOINT STATEMENT, HOWEVER, PROBABLY INTENDED TO CLOSE  
THE RIFT WHICH HAS APPEARED BETWEEN THE NORTH AND THE  
SOUTH OR, IN PERSONAL TERMS, BETWEEN NABLUS MAYOR BASSAM  
SHAKA' AND BETHLEHEM MAYOR ELIAS FREIJ OVER ANTI-VAT  
STRATEGY AND TACTICS. ALSO OF NOTE IS THAT NABLUS' CALL  
REPORTEDLY CAME AFTER MEETING OF BUSINESS LEADERS, CITY  
COUNCILMEN, PROFESSIONALS, LABOR LEADERS AND YOUTHS,  
WHICH SUGGESTS THE BREADTH OF INVOLVEMENT OF POPULACE  
THERE AND IMPORTANT ROLE OF LATTER TWO GROUPS, IN PARTICULAR,  
IN CONTINUING THE STRIKE.  
NEWLIN

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** WEST BANK, MILITARY OCCUPIED AREAS, VALUE ADDED TAXES, GENERAL STRIKES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 23 AUG 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** saccheem  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976JERUSA01116  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760322-0272  
**From:** JERUSALEM  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19760829/aaaaazer.tel  
**Line Count:** 82  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION NEA  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 76 JERUSALEM 1101  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** saccheem  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 19 MAY 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <19 MAY 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <12 OCT 2004 by saccheem>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** ANTI VAT STRIKE ENDS ON WEST BANK  
**TAGS:** ECON, PINS, IS, JO  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006